VOL. 11 NO. 3
FEBRUARY 1981
ISSUE NO. 218

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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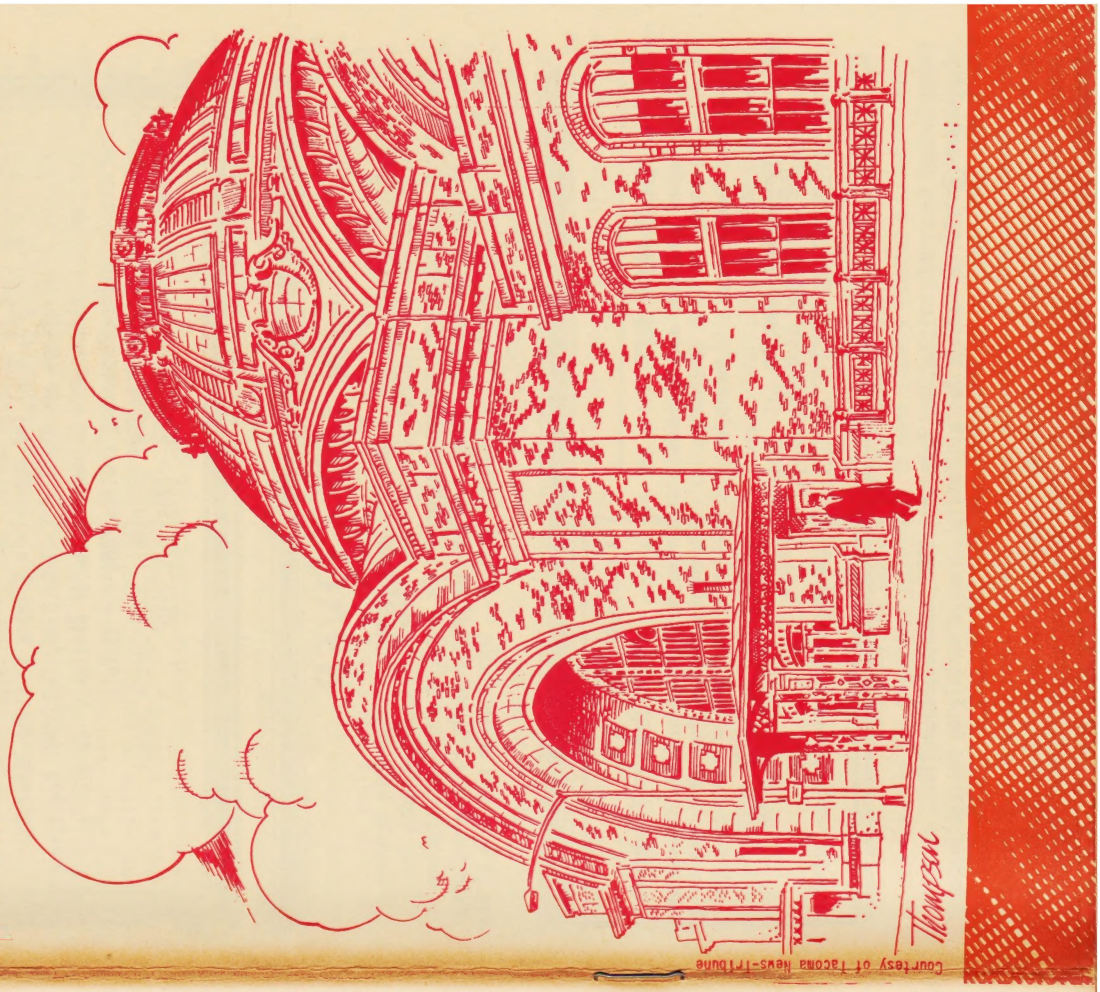

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Rail Travel News, Vol. 11, No. 3. February, 1981. Whole number 218.
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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $18.00 per year; single copy 75¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts.

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Amtrak on Feb 19 submitted its Fiscal Year 1982 budget needs to Congress in the form of a letter to Senator Packwood, Chairman of the Commerce Committee. Here is the text of Amtrak's public statement about that letter:

"The requested operating budget for FY 1982 is based on a principle to which the company is committed for the future, namely, not to ask for any money to fund the basic system than it actually had for that purpose in FY 1981, corrected only for inflation. Any future system growth would be funded thru 403-B trains, thru productivity increases and revenue growth, or on a contract basis paid for by those wanting that service, be it Congress, a particular state, a transit authority, or private entity.

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*The 1979 route restructuring directed by Congress established route criteria for six trains which were designated as substitute service. The criteria they had to meet were 150 passenger miles per train mile (PM/TM) and a 7¢ loss--upped to 10¢ this year because of inflation--per passenger mile. Two of the six trains--the SHENANDOAH and the CARDINAL--fail to meet these criteria. The Washington section of the BROADWAY LIMITED is also subject to a rerouting. Congress will consider these changes which could result in a savings to Amtrak of $11 million during the next fiscal year. The proposed rerouted BROADWAY would go via Cumberland and join the New York section at Pittsburgh.

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*Also included in proposed changes are the elimination of three low-ridership frequencies in the Northeast Corridor. Rescheduling of the remaining trains should result in minimum loss of passengers while savings add up to $9 million.

*Another item eliminated in the 1982 budget proposal is funding for certain commuter trains, including some Silverliners, some clockers, the MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE, the BLUE RIDGE and Chicago-Valparaiso service. The 1979 law requires that if Amtrak continues operating such trains it must be completely reimbursed for their losses.

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on our investment. When these investments are combined with our proposed budget economies, which can become a reality given Congressional support, the prospect for our national system is extremely bright. We are relying heavily on increased productivity of the 21,000 Amtrak employees and the 18,000 employees of other railroads who make Amtrak work. Together, we are dedicated to a quality rail transportation system that serves our national interest.'

"It should be noted that several Congressional requirements for Amtrak are already being successfully carried on: (1) Amtrak is on or ahead of schedule in achieving a 44% revenue-to-cost ratio in 1982 and a 50% ratio in 1985; (2) Amtrak has improved its average speeds toward the goal of 55mph systemwide; (3) Amtrak achieved a 57% on-time figure for FY 1979 and a 69% on-time figure for FY 1980. Amtrak operated on-time slightly over 81% in Jan 1981, the highest figure for January in its corporate history."

In late February the White House announced that it had miscalculated its budget cut needs, and that $3.1 billion more must be cut from the Federal budget. No details of where those cuts would be proposed was made at that time.

RTN INTERVIEWS NARP PRESIDENT JACK MARTIN

RTN EDITOR JIM RUSSELL INTERVIEWED JACK MARTIN, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OR RAILROAD PASSENGERS, AS HE WAS TRAVELING TO THE BAY AREA ON AMTRAK'S SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR BETWEEN MARTINEZ AND OAKLAND ON FEB. 26. THE INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE IN SIGHTSEER LOUNGE CAR 33007 ON A SHOWERY DAY OF SPECTACULAR BAYSIDE SCENERY.

RTN: Our readers want to know what is about to happen to Amtrak with the proposed funding cuts.

NARP: I don't know what's going to happen to Amtrak--I wish I knew. We have (OMB Director) David Stockman who apparently has always been a frustrated little Indian, and they give him a tomahawk and he wants to go around lifting scalps, and he's taken one that people find fashionable to try to lift--Amtrak's. Remember tho, that David Stockman has no vote in either the Senate or the House any longer--he was a Congressman from Michigan, but he's not that anymore. So when it comes around to funding by Amtrak, it's going to be what the House and the Senate want to do. The key people in the Senate, Packwood and Hatfield, both from Oregon, recognize, I think, that Amtrak provides a service. But there's going to be a lot of pressure from the Administration to cut spending, and Amtrak is a very visible target. A lot of people think you shouldn't put money into the railroad. Maybe that's true, but if you're not going to put money into the railroad, then don't put it into the airlines and every thing else that competes with the railroad.

RTN: What should readers do, and when, to help stave off the budget cuts?

NARP: The main thing is: if everyone of your readers, everyone of our members, everyone associated in any way with rail passenger service sits down in the next 2-3 weeks and writes a letter to each of their U.S. Senators and to their Congressmen and say "Look, Amtrak provides a service, people are riding the trains." Contrary to what Mr. Stockman says there aren't any empty trains--there are a couple of legs of routes that don't have many people on them, but Stockman says we've got to get rid of all these trains that are running around empty. But you should write right now. If you start writing letters now, Senators and Congressmen are going to sit up and take notice of the fact that people support Amtrak. The letters need to make the following points: (1) the train is energy-efficient, (2) that Amtrak now has new equipment or rebuilt equipment on every route except one (the SILVER STAR, and that will be on by mid-summer), (3) the safety record is a factor, and (4) the relatively economical method of traveling it represents in the face of spiralling airline fares and gasoline prices.

I think that one of the most valid points right now is that Amtrak has all this new or rebuilt equipment and they ought to be given a year or two to see how that cuts their costs and how that attracts the public when the public knows the trains will run on time and the air conditioning will work. The public will be much more responsive than they've been in the past. That's another point.

Besides Senators and Congressmen, you can write to your governor and your state Dept. of Transportation people, because they're going to be able to exert a lot of influence on what happens in Washington.

RTN: Would you say a little more about Amtrak ridership?

NARP: Philosophically I don't disagree with getting rid of trains that are running around empty. But first of all, you've got to find one like that. And we don't have that situation. We have a SHENANDOAH that is empty west of Cumberland--or fairly light, tho it has picked up noticeably in the last few months. We have an INTER-AMERICAN that is pretty sparsely traveled south of San Antonio toward Laredo, and that's a leg that if we have to have a sacrificial lamb, maybe that's the one to have. The TexARP people and the NARP people in Texas all say that they'd be willing to give up the Temple-Houston leg because it's a travesty also. But the rest of the system is being heavily patronized. February is traditionally a slow travel month, but ridership is up over what it was last year. It's up everywhere on almost every route except in the NE Corridor. And the NEC gets all the play from the transportation people.

RTN: What will happen in Congress when this issue comes up?

NARP: Jim Florio, chairman of the House Surface Transportation Subcommittee--that is the key subcommittee in the House Commerce Committee--Florio is basically the architect of Amtrak as we know it now. He's the guy who steered the 150 passenger miles per train mile, 7¢ per passenger mile standard thru Congress two years ago. He also was responsible for getting a lot of the funding for capital improvements. He's in the same Chair he was in two years ago, and I think there's a fair chance Florio will say "Hey, wait a minute--this is my program! And it's proven successful beyond anybody's expectations, and I'm not gonna let anybody dismantle it." So you could have a pretty good inter-party fight there. The House majority leader, Jim Wright from Texas--his area includes Fort Worth. He's going to lose the INTER-AMERICAN on a daily basis if Amtrak goes thru with their plans. Apparently very recently he's said that he's begun to see the light. Now, what can he do? He can do a lot if he makes up his mind to do it. And the other person is John Dingle of Michigan, Chairman of the House Commerce Committee. I have been informed that Dingle has said "We're going to have more trains because we need more trains." Now, does that mean in Michigan or across the country? That I don't know.

RTN: Would you comment on Amtrak's budget proposal to Congress:

NARP: If Alan Boyd goes on the line publicly and says he needs the $716 operating funds, I'll accept that at face value. I think Boyd's basically done a very good job with Amtrak, and I think he's due some credit for that. What I don't agree with is the proposed restructuring of some of the services. The adjustment of frequencies in the NEC by eliminating three trains in each direction to save $9 million is fine with me; I think the NEC has enough service, and it's tough to be very sympathetic if you have to wait 45 minutes for the train instead of 30 when some people are waiting 2 or 3 days on tri-weekly service. I can accept the discontinuance of the SHENANDOAH west of Cumberland if we re-route the BROADWAY's Washington section via Cumberland up to Pittsburgh. I cannot accept the loss of the CARDINAL, which would leave Cincinnati, Charleston WV and some lesser-sized cities without service at all. The CARDINAL has never been given a proper shot. You have to change trains in Washington; we've been after Amtrak for two years to try to run cars thru to New York, and they had announced plans to do it come April. That may be too late. By their own marketing department's figures they lose 50% of

their ridership every time they force you to change trains. (I think the figure is a little high, but let's assume it's correct.) If you had a 50% increase in CARDINAL ridership, it would meet the criteria on psgr miles/ train mile (it already meets it on cents/PM).

As I said, I'm willing to give up the INTER-AMERICAN's San Antonio-Laredo leg if we must because there's nothing else that can be done in the near future to improve performance. They have freight problems, and you can't get across the river at Laredo into Mexico, so you can not run a thru service with the National of Mexico. The Houston segment of it is an unfortunate disaster that no one seems to know the way around. Amtrak has looked at some options, but they've simply not found any of them attractive enough to implement. I understand they went to Jim Wright last year to generate support for re-routing the train from Longview down thru Palestine, and finding the $10 million that the MoPac wanted for capital improvements, Jim Wright said "It's a great idea. Forget it!" It would have meant that Fort Worth, his district, would have lost the train or a part of the train. I do not believe that Amtrak will realize enough economy by changing to tri-weekly operation to make a substantial difference. The train has never been given a fair shot. It's had Amfleet cars with all the problems that Amfleet brings to long distance trains. It's had poor timekeeping at best, and poor is a charitable word to use. It has had negative publicity for years, and that negative publicity has driven away potential riders. It's had lousy equipment for years, lousy dining facilities, and that has driven away actual riders--people who might come back, as has the poor on-time performance. We've recommended to Amtrak that if they go ahead with their plan to convert the Congressional coaches in storage to HEP that those cars be put on the INTER-AMERICAN and on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS. There are legrests available to put in them. Leave them at 60 seats, take the Amfleet cars that are now running on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS and the INTER-AMERICAN, and put the Amfleet in the Corridor. Run these cars (they're compatible with HEP diners and sleepers) and you'd end up with a much more attractive train and much better service and it would be much more conducive to long distance travel. I don't know if they'll do that. I talked with Alan Boyd and Tom Hackney about it back in December and earlier this week before I left on this trip I wrote Boyd a

Jack Martin contemplates the Amtrak budget problem as he surveys the scenery from Sightseer lounge 33007. RTN photo.

note and asked him whether they'd made a decision. I think the INTER-AMERICAN run properly and marketed properly with good equipment and on-time performance would be a very successful train and would meet the criteria.

RTN: NARP has said that its strategy is to avoid being drawn into a route-by-route debate. Do you think Amtrak is starting such a debate by naming specific route cutbacks in its budget proposal?

NARP: I would rather give you my impression of what they may be doing. If you look at the routes that they have picked you note that the INTER-AMERICAN runs thru the district of the House majority leader, Jim Wright of Texas, and while Wright hasn't been supportive in the past, I think he may be more supportive now, especially if he will lose part of his service. The CARDINAL runs thru the state of the Senate minority leader, Robert Byrd of West Virginia, and he's already been quoted as saying he doesn't like the plan that would result in the discontinuance of the CARDINAL. So it may be that they've taken a politically expedient way to get rid of a couple trains in the hopes that they'll generate some political support. Now that's based on looking at what they've done--that's not based on anything that anybody's told me. They would of course deny publicly that they're doing anything like that. But you don't have to stretch your imagination too far to see that they're really treading on some people who might otherwise be construed to be their friends with enough power to help them with their difficulties. I don't think they'll get into a route-by-route situation, but on the other hand, if you're going to take the train away from one area and then that train is saved, chances are that a Congressman or Senator from another area is going to start yelling about keeping his train. And you can't separate these things from the route-by-route aspect of them. The PIONEER is a good example. It's not the best performer in the system by far; but Amtrak has said nothing about discontinuing it and their rationale there is that "it contributes so much revenue to the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR that you can't take it solely as a train running between Salt Lake City and Portland or Seattle--you have to look at its impact on the overall system." That's fine--that's good rationalization. I'd buy that. But you can apply that same argument to the SOUTHWEST LIMITED. If you take off the SWL, you will deny 25 or 30 connecting passengers every day to the BROADWAY and the LAKE SHORE, which will in turn impact negatively on their ridership. The whole system is a piece that fits together, and you can't take one route and lift it out of the system and put it aside and analyze it totally based solely on what happens between the two end points on that route.

I don't know what Amtrak's going to do politically--I wish I did. I hope that Alan Boyd doesn't underestimate the negative pressures being brought to bear. But the system is in the best shape it's ever been in. Ridership is going to be the highest ever this year, the equipment is in the best condition ever, the trains are running on time--they were 81% on time in January, the highest figure ever for Amtrak, and in one of the worst weather months. So it's hard not to see some light thru the clouds from time to time--whether that will be enough, I don't know.

RTN: How do you evaluate Stockman's statement that all transportation modes are going to suffer equally in these budget cuts?

NARP: I think it's a valid position to take--but it's NOT what they're doing in actuality. Stockman's definition of treating everyone the same is to hold the line on spending increases. But in fact what he's doing is to single out Amtrak and not hold the line--Amtrak's own budget recommendations hold the line--he's saying he wants to cut that by 25-35%, and in my judgment it's just pure hypocrisy to say they're going to treat everyone the same; that's not what he's doing. I would welcome treating everyone the same--holding the line on the increases. Amtrak could hold the line on their increases and have all the money they'd need next year. They could even do what they've suggested, which is stick with the same operating figure they had for this year, which in fact is less than, not an increase over, what it was from year to year, and I think they could still operate the full system. But Stockman is not doing that with Amtrak--he's taking Amtrak and apparently he's trying to make a Guinea pig out of it. That's my view.

Now, you're talking about 5% of the U.S. DOT budget, over which they will make 95% of the noise. And it's less than 3% of the total transportation budget in the country. But it will have a great percentage of the noise made about it. Certainly mass transit will get a lot of noise also--there will be a lot of challenges to that.

RTN: Are highways being cut significantly?

NARP: I haven't seen any highway cuts

at all yet. There has been talk of not finishing the Interstate system, but no one has brought that about as yet. And the highway lobby, the contractors, the auto manufacturers, service station trade asscciations, the tourist groups, the people in Vegas and wherever you take your car when you take your car, are a very powerful force. And the chance of cutting the highways significantly is, I think, very slim. Reason says you don't continue to build highways when you're talking about $2 a gallon gasoline by the end of the year, and when you're talking about cars that no longer cost $3500-4500. People simply can't afford cars, neither can they afford airline tickets. And if you can't afford a car, can't afford the gasoline, and very few people will ride the bus for any great distance, what does that leave? That leaves the train. And if we get rid of the trains, the precious few we already have, you're just going to wreak further havoc on the ability of the American people to travel.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

MASS TRANSIT FUNDING has come under strong attack from the Reagan administration, and the counterattack seems to be beginning. The case of National City Lines has surfaced again. NCL was an affiliate of General Motors and other automobile-allied corporations which successfully bought out many rail transit systems around the U.S. and converted them to bus operations, in the 1930's. To demonstrate how corporate greed did in our rail systems, that could have been upgraded and in use now in these energy-short times, Harper's magazine published in its Feb issue an essay by Jonathan Kwitny on the National City Lines story. This story last surfaced back in 1974 (see RTN nos. 78 and 82) when Senate hearings were held on this matter. Kwitny notes that the corporations involved were convicted of conspiracy, but their fines proved to be small. For the 1974 Senate study, look for Bradford C. Snell's 102-page report entitled "American Ground Transport".

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA has moved a step closer to having a new Advanced Light Rail Transit system (ALRT) with the Greater Vancouver Regional District's approval of the plan, under which the Urban Transportation Development Corp., a Crown Corporation in Ontario, will design the system. This regional government body indicated it wants to make sure that the system is operating by the mid-1980's.

NEW ORLEANS AREA is now engaged in a debate over whether to plan for a light rail transit system or to rely on buses. Among those supporting the rail alternative is Louisiana Association of RR Passengers vice president Mortimore Kelly, who on Feb 10 saw his supportive letter published in the Times-Picayune.

NEW YORK MAYOR Koch was very critical of the Reagan administration's transit funding cut proposals at a symposium on Feb 23. He called the plan "the dumbest thing I ve heard of in years" and said that he would make the fight against it his first priority. Otherwise, Koch has generally supported the Reagan administration.

TRANSIT OPERATING SUBSIDIES would be cut by the Reagan administration starting with fiscal year 1982. The proposed cut for each year thru 1986 would be (in millions): $96, $256, $600, $1,083, and $1,356. The actual amount of the subsidies for each year would then be: (in millions) $780, $797, $568, $201, and $42. Grants for system construction would likewise be cut year by year, starting with 1981: $31, $270, $545, $975, $1,284, and $1,480. The total budget for each year thru 1986 would then be: $2,713, $2,530, $2,465, $2,362, $2,385, and $2,516. For both of these categories, the budget would drop each year, except for a small rise in 1986 for construction grants. On the other hand, highway financing would rise each year, tho at a slower rate than by current projections. Totals for highway, starting with 1982 (there is no cut for 1981), would be: $8,157, $8,643, $9,128, $9,415, and $10,161.

TOP TRANSIT OFFICIALS from around the nation met in Washington on Feb 27 to plan strategy for fighting Reagan's transit budget cuts. They forecast fare increases of 35-45% if funds are cut and local tax increases do not take their place.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI Railway bus loaded with at least 70 people was in a collision with a gravel truck the morning of Feb 26, injuring virtually everyone aboard. The most serious injury was a case of almost total paralysis.

RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL CANADA and Amtrak are reported ready to begin a joint service between Toronto and New York via Niagara Falls, to replace the TH&B Toronto-Buffalo Dayliner. The CTC must approve the service, and the Dayliner discontinuance. Amtrak equipment will be used, but while in Canada the train will operate as a VIA train. Startup is to be Apr 26 for the 480-mile, 12-hour trip. One-way fare is expected to be $58. Toronto departure will be 9:05am, with an 8:45pm New York arrival. New York departure will be 8:45am, to arrive in Toronto at 8:35pm. Consist is to be two Amcoaches, Amdinette, baggage and one locomotive.

WINNIPEG-TO-FARLANE, Ont. trains 148-149 were ordered continued by order of the Canadian Transport Commission on Feb 9.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY reduced the frequency of its passenger service as of Feb 16. North Vancouver-Prince George service is reduced from tri-weekly to weekly, departing North Vancouver on Monday and Prince George on Sunday. North Vancouver-Lillooet service is trimmed from daily to four times weekly. Northbound departures are on Sat, Sun, Mon and Wed, as are southbound trips. Local service between D'Arcy and Lillooet continue daily. Meal stops are made at Lillooet and Williams Lake, as the train carries no food. The condition of the Dayliners makes necessary the reduction in service, BCR said. Discussions are underway on the future of the runs.

CP RAIL ENDS its Nanaimo-Vancouver ferry service May 30, and will sell the vessel "Princess of Vancouver. Barge freight service will continue.

VIA PASSENGERS RIOT: The evening of Feb 7 passengers boarding the North Shore Dayliner out of Ste-Foy found insufficient space on the train after leaving the Quebec Carnival, and the train left a number behind. These intending passengers occupied the station and "rioted", so that police had to restore order. A chartered bus arrived two hours later to carry them to Montreal

PRINCE ALBERT COMMUNITY support is reported low for the Saskatoon-Prince Albert Dayliner, which is running on a one-year trial basis. The city's representiative on the monitoring committee reportedly called the train a "dinosaur", and the representative from Saskatoon wasn't positive either. Transport 2000 is protesting to the city councils about this local bias which would affect the evaluation of the train's performance.

VIA'S "APEX" FARES for spring cut roundtrip prices by 40% on trips where the regular one-way coach fare is $45 or more and the return trip begins no later than May 14. Example: Ottawa-Vancouver regular fare is $300 roundtrip coach; with APEX it is only $180.

TRANSPORT 2000 OTTAWA held its annual meeting Feb 4. Elected president was Raymonde Gagnon-Cahill of Chelsea; vice president is Mark Walton; director on T-2000 Canada board is Harry Gow, with alternate delegate Doug Stoltz.

MONTREAL URBAN COMMUNITY and the Quebec transport ministry on Feb 4 agreed to a plan to integrate Montreal commuter lines. A single monthly pass will be available for use on CN and CP trains, on buses and the Metro. Work on the Metro's east-west line, held up since 1976, can start at once. Plans for a "regional Metro" can begin along the north part of the island. The whole plan will cost $900 million. It ends a long deadlock between the city of Montreal and its suburbs over the integration of commuter train lines and the MUC Transit Commission.

CALIFORNIA READIES ITS STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

The state of California is preparing for the May 2 dedication of its State Railroad Museum at Sacramento. To mark the occasion, there will be a Railfair running thru May 10, as mentioned previously in RTN. The Museum will be a part of the California State Park System, and the total facility includes the reconstructed Central Pacific Railroad Station (circa 1876), the Big Four Complex, and the Museum of Railroad History.

The Museum of Railroad History is the largest of its kind in the world, housing 21 pieces of historic railroad rolling stock, hundreds of authentic artifacts and folklore, and many exhibits and displays. Below is a detailed description of the Museum, as provided by the State Department of Parks and Recreation:

After purchasing a ticket, visitors enter a comfortable lobby. There is a lounge, a coat and parcel room, and an information center, as well as displays of railroad artifacts and graphics. A wall of back-lit images extends upward through the ceiling to a second floor. Visitors follow a ramp to the orientation exhibit, a spacious room filled with hundreds of the sights and sounds of railroading -- images that change and merge across the sculptured wall surface while railroad songs and the sounds of steam engines fill the room.

Visitors then step into one of two identical (145-seat) theatres, where a 12-minute motion picture further orients them. At the film's end, the movie screen rises to reveal the Sierra Scene -- a 10,000 square foot, full-scale diorama of an 1860s railroad construction scene in the high Sierra, which is a life-size extension of the last scenes of the film. The lifelike diorama includes a snow shed, a tunnel, and the steam locomotive Governor Stanford, built in 1862. Visitors leave the theatre and walk through the diorama, stopping to examine exhibits dealing with such subjects as the Sacramento Valley Railroad (California's first railroad), the Central Pacific Railroad, people who built the Transcontinental Railroad, the Big Four, and the famous Gold Spike ceremony.

A tunnel through simulated snow-covered granite walls is the route by which visitors leave the Sierra Scene and enter the Great Hall. Across the hall, a most impressive exhibit looms above them. A narrow-gauge freight train is elevated twenty-four feet above the floor, on a bridge between the main hall and the six-stall roundhouse. The elevated 1920s train consists of Nevada Short Line Railways Locomotive No. 1, two freight cars, and a red caboose.

To their right on the ground floor, visitors see a narrow-gauge passenger train. At its head is the exquisitely restored locomotive Sonoma, followed by an 1874 combination car and the Silver State, a lavishly decorated coach.

To the left is a standard-gauge passenger train from the 1870s with its Virginia and Truckee Locomotive No. 12 -- Genoa -- and a Virginia and Truckee combination car. This train is on an authentic 1884 Phoenix Iron Works bridge; nearby exhibits demonstrate railroad construction methods and technology.

Visitors walk between the two passenger trains to the center of the museum, and can choose from several exhibits. Ahead is the roundhouse, to the left is the Mirror Volume, and to the right is the People Garden -- an area containing nine life-size mannequins that are dressed to depict various railroad occupations such as the engineer, the conductor, and the track worker, all with appropriate attire and tools of their trades. Visitors can sit and relax here, or examine exhibit cases of people-related artifacts.

Nearby is the architecture exhibit. Against the north wall of the building, a four-fifths scale facade of a two-story passenger station includes a waiting room and a ticket office, with living quarters upstairs for the station agent. Once inside the waiting room, visitors can look into the ticket and telegraph offices, which appear to be in use and are furnished as

(continued on page 14)

FLYING OVER SAN JOSE AT LOW ALTITUDE AND OTHER SUPERLINER ADVENTURES

by James Russell

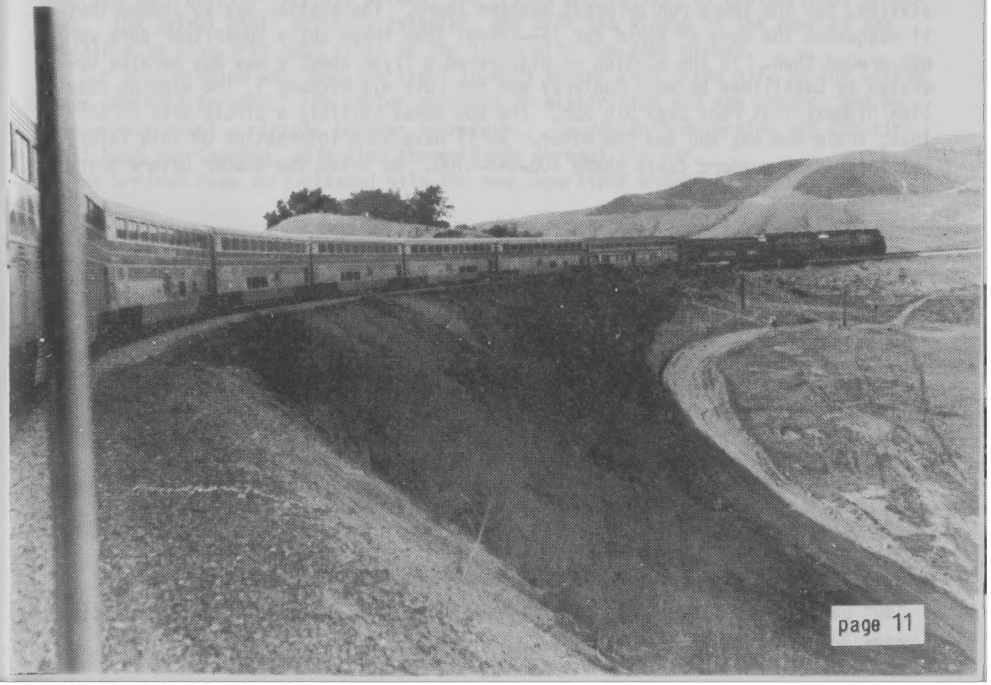
A February weekend provided the long-awaited opportunity to try out Amtrak's Superliner sleeping cars as well as a chance to head south away from the chilly breezes of a North Pacific storm. We would ride by coach from Oakland to San Luis Obispo on the COAST STARLIGHT, and then return by sleeper after a day spent in that charming Central California Coast city.

Our number 11 pulled into Oakland on time, powered by SP diesel 9228 and Amtrak F40 units 229 and 323. The train had started out in Seattle the morning before, and of course the crowd aboard made it necessary to search hard for adjacent seats for our group of six. We found them in the lead passenger car, the electrified Santa Fe Hi-level car that usually precedes the Superliner equipment and provides a step-down transition to the baggage car ahead.

Feeling fortunate to have found space in the Santa Fe car, as we'd previously noted that the riding quality surpassed that of the Superliners, and that the visibility from one's seat is better due to the smaller seat backs, we settled down to enjoy our trip. It wasn't until some time later that we took a walk back thru the Superliner cars behind us and discovered that the ride of our coach was the worst of the entire train! Amtrak has been doing something to the Superliner trucks--we understand they've been installing shims in some of them to improve the ride--and the improvement is really noticeable!

The scenery today was really superb. Early spring blossoms were in their glory and the sky was filled with spectacular clouds from a clearing storm. Our vantage point high above the tracks gave us a commanding perspective for viewing the scene.

Northbound Superliner STARLIGHT climbs the Cuesta Grade via the famous horseshoe curve just north of San Luis Obispo. All photos by the author.



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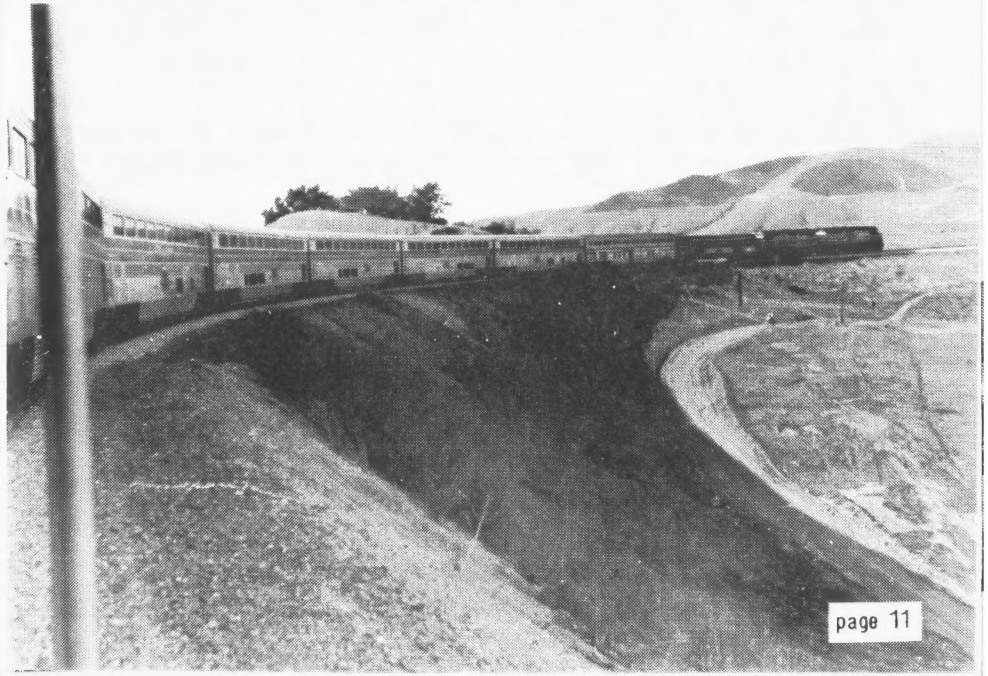
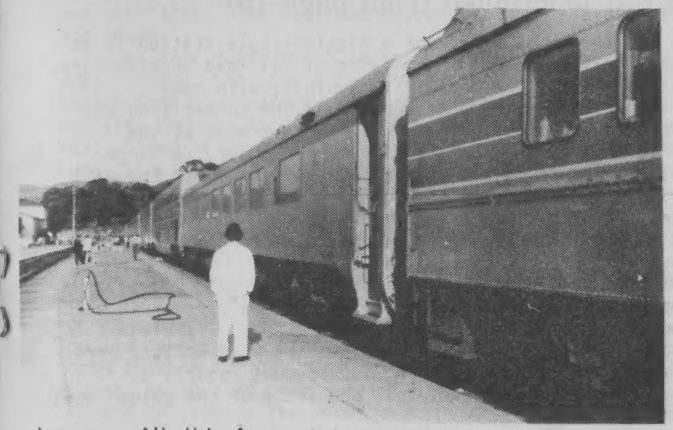


With the cars now gliding along more smoothly than before, one gets the impression of flying thru city and countryside at low altitude. We magically glided thru San Jose and then past orchards readying themselves for bloom, and by vast fields of artichokes already being harvested.

Lunch in the diner was very good. Amtrak has found a very nicely seasoned Lasagna to serve.

We slowly, almost imperceptibly climbed the hills at the south end of the Salinas Valley, and soon we were in the first tunnel above the Cuesta Grade. It's fun to watch the reactions of travelers unfamiliar with this route as the train emerges from the first tunnel. And sure enough, there were exclamations of "Isn't this lovely!" in our car, and "This is really very nice--all those green hills..." as passengers surveyed the panorama of hills towering above us and leading far below to the narrow line of Highway 101 climbing the grade. Unfortunately, there was no Sightseer lounge yet in this consist, nor the following day (which was actually the same equipment set turned at L.A.).

We curved down the grade and stopped at San Luis at 2:30, exactly on time. The station was awash in people and vehicles. It seemed that half of California had come to San Luis this weekend! There was a tour bus to San Simeon Castle outside the station, for the tours run by Great Western Tours. The station was so jammed that it suggested the days of World War II--except that these shiny Superliner cars were not around then. In the station we discovered a flyer about a new bus service operated by Coastlines between Monterey and San Luis via Highway 1, the winding coastline highway that runs past Big Sur. The bus makes possible a circle trip to Salinas, train one way and bus the other. We'll have more information on this later, but interested readers could phone 408-649-4700. We tried the number before going



(Left:) Southbound train we weren't riding carried Sightseer lounge car 33010. (Right:) Our northbound train on Sunday carried SP business car "Oakland" on the rear, preceded by buffer car SP 293. SP Chief Engineer Berkshire occupied the "Oakland" which has its own hotel power.

to press with this issue, but there was no answer.

The two STARLIGHTS arrive in San Luis at almost the same time in mid-afternoon. The Sunday of our departure we watched the southbound train arrive, and then our number 14 pulled in, with two SP business cars in tow (see picture caption). This was our chance to ride in a Superliner sleeper--tho in day service--and we anxiously boarded car 32004 at the rear of the Superliner set. We had two adjacent deluxe bedrooms upstairs, and the porter promised to "be right up and show you how everything works." An hour later, after much ringing of the porter bell, he appeared and asked whether we'd figured everything out. We wanted the wall opened between our rooms to form a bedroom suite, and he obliged, but not without a struggle, since he hadn't done that before.

I am delighted to state that the sleeper rode as smoothly as any car I've been in, and very quietly--totally without the creaks and rattles of conventional sleepers. The swivel chair actually swiveled, and with the window in the door it was possible to view from both sides of the train with the door closed.

Our only problem was that the light in each shower kept going off, so the little room couldn't be used. The porter summoned an electrician who was aboard, and he repeatedly reset a circuit breaker downstairs. He couldn't determine why the circuit kept overloading, affecting these lights thruout the car.

We arrived home very pleased with the new Superliner equipment.

180° panorama is obtained by joining four photographs of San Luis Obispo station area, taken as southbound STARLIGHT arrives. Photos by the author.

RAILROAD MUSEUM (continued from page 10)

they might have been in the 1930s. A facade of a mission-style station is to the left; it contains graphics depicting other styles of railroad architecture.

Further along the north wall is the Name-Train Exhibit, with many artifacts illustrating the design of the name trains and the competition and promotion to encourage passengers to travel on such famous trains as the Challenger, the California Zephyr, The 49er, and the Super Chief. A large wall displays the trademarks and drumheads of the famous flyers. On the wall is an exhibit case created out of the side of a genuine stainless steel diner lounge car. The visitors, walking along the side of the car, will look through the windows and see timetables, china, pamphlets, advertising, and other materials from the grand era of railroad travel.

Opposite the streamliner exhibit visitors can observe the Gold Coast, a private car built in the 1890s, but restored to its appearance circa 1948 when it was owned by the famous journalist and author Lucius Beebe. Its elegant dining room, bedroom, and observation lounge reflect an era when private cars, or land-yachts, crisscrossed the country visiting such famous resorts as Saratoga and Palm Springs. Colorful exhibits tell the story of the golden age of private cars.

4449 steam engine will be a feature of dedication events. RTN photo.

Partially under the bridge that supports the narrow-gauge freight train is the agriculture exhibit -- a 1924 refrigerator or "reefer" car, standing by a produce loading platform. Atop the car, a mannequin is seen dropping a 300-pound ice block into the car's ice compartment. Inside the reefer, visitors will feel a cool draft provided by a hidden air conditioner. They will see a multi-screen audiovisual program at one end of the car that tells of the relationship between railroads and agriculture. Platform displays further expand this story.

From the reefer car, visitors step into a gallery space under the bridge to learn about lumber industry railroads. Distinctive logging locomotives, specialized rolling stock, sharp curves, and steep grades are illustrated with artifacts, graphics, and a large, scale-model logging scene. An audiovisual program shows logging engines, such as the shay, at work in the forests of northern California.

Commerce is the subject of the next exhibit -- a railroad car game-board that provides hands-on experience matching commodities with appropriate railroad transport: oil with a tank car, coal with a hopper car, and lettuce with a reefer. Through trial and error, visitors learn which cars would carry sugar beets, wheat, milk, lumber, and automobiles.

In the railroad folklore exhibit, an authentic railroad building is used as a mini-theatre, designed for fifteen or twenty visitors at a time. Outside, a speaker plays a continuous selection of railroad songs -- "Casey Jones," "The Wreck of the Ninety-Seven," "Hobo Bill's Last Ride" -- and the area is decorated with graphics of folk artists and folk heroes. Inside, an audiovisual program tells the stories and plays the music associated with such legendary people as Casey Jones and John Henry, and tells of the influence of the steam locomotive on popular music -- "I can hear her whistle blow a hundred miles..." Here, too, is a small diorama of a hobo camp as well as displays of poetry and paperback novels with railroad themes of the sort that

were popular at the turn of the century. The folklore exhibit illustrates the overall intention to make this museum more than a static exhibit of equipment and artifacts. The railroad museum is to be a living museum, full of action and sound.

With folk music still in the background, visitors enter the roundhouse area. There, they see a thrilling, one-of-a-kind exhibit -- a forty-foot long, twelve-foot high cutaway model of a steam locomotive. Step-by-step programming explains how the locomotive works, beginning with a simulated fire in the fire box. Steam is produced in the boiler, then flows to the cylinders. The wheels turn, slowly at first, then faster and faster. The engine sounds build to accompany the motion. The effects are accomplished by illusion, using electronics and the polarized screen technique, but they explain simply and clearly the functioning of a steam engine and its various parts. It is a memorable educational experience.

In the roundhouse, visitors will see giant steam locomotives including Santa Fe's No. 1010, a large 2-6-2 that was used for Death Valley Scotty's record breaking high-speed run to Chicago in 1905. The Northwestern Pacific No. 112 is a ten-wheeler built in 1908 that spent much of its life in the north coast redwoods. The Union Pacific's No. 4466, a husky 0-6-0 switch engine, is located over a maintenance pit seven feet deep. Visitors can descend to examine the working parts of this 125-ton locomotive looming over them.

The only diesel locomotive in the museum is No. 6051, used by Southern Pacific to pull its famous streamliner, The Daylight, between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Visitors who walk through the engine room and cab can fully appreciate the complexity of the diesel locomotive. A nearby floor exhibit explains how the diesel engine drives an electric generator that powers the traction motors driving the locomotive.

At the other end of the roundhouse, ramps allow visitors to see two large, steel cars. The first is a Great Northern Railway Post Office Car, where an interpreter explains the one-hundred-year history of the railway mail service. A portion of this car is set up with mailbags, mail, and other related items, as if the car were in use. Visitors learn how mail was picked up "on the fly" while passing through a town and quickly sorted enroute, to be dropped at another town down the line. They can try sorting mail, placing the letters in the appropriate pigeon holes and mail sacks.

The next car is a heavyweight sleeper built in 1929 and named St. Hyacinthe. The car sways as if it is in motion; the curtains are drawn, beds are made up, lights are dimmed, and the sounds of rolling wheels and a distant whistle filter through the dark night. Lights flash by the windows as if from a passing train, and the red glow of a crossing signal sweeps by, accompanied by the sound of its bell. Visitors feel as if they are on a train that is rushing through the night. As they leave the car and come back to the real world, the final part of the museum visit lies ahead.

On their right, visitors will see the diminutive, jewel-like locomotive, the C. P. Huntington. Placed in a window setting, it is twenty-nine feet long, a 4-2-4T, and was built in 1863. This brightly painted engine is amply trimmed with shining, polished metals (including genuine gold leaf) and has the distinction of being Southern Pacific Locomotive No. 1.

Across from and contrasting with the diminutive C. P. Huntington stands the largest locomotive in the collection, the Southern Pacific cab-forward; it is almost 126 feet long and weighed more than one million pounds in working order. **This locomotive was the last new steam engine acquired by the Southern Pacific, and was used extensively on the tough mountain grades of the Sierra. No other cab-forward locomotives of this type exist anywhere in the world.**

The visitors, now in a carpeted foyer, come upon a brilliantly illuminated exhibit called the Mirror Volume. A beautifully restored 2-6-0 locomotive, the Empire, is set into a large mirrored showcase that allows every part of the engine to be seen, while an audio program describes this colorful locomotive and its history on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad.

Visitors can walk into the mirrored area and around the side of the Empire, where they will see a huge exhibit case -- eight feet high and forty feet long. Here is the museum's extensive collection of artifacts that illustrate how the symbolism and mythology of railroads have permeated

virtually every aspect of our lives. From advertising with a railroad motif to children's toy trains, from candy containers in locomotive shapes to railroad-themed games, puzzles, and children's books -- the list is voluminous. Hundreds of items fill the case, which extends the full length of the locomotive. The last display on the main floor is Thomas Hill's enormous historic painting, "The Last Spike."

At this point in the tour, the visitors can go upstairs and walk along the bridge for a closer look at the narrow gauge freight train or step out on the overlook for a birds-eye view of the turntable and the Sacramento River. Space on the second floor will be used to display a variety of special exhibits that may be changed from time to time.

Back on the ground floor, visitors will leave through a courtyard leading to the museum gift shop, the library, and the hardware exhibit in the Big Four Building. Visitors can also walk over to the C.P.R.R. passenger station (about one block south) where a variety of rolling stock will be on display.

Besides the Museum and the rebuilt CPRR station, the facility includes the Big Four Complex, the original restored buildings that housed the offices of the Central Pacific Railroad--headquarters for the "big four": Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Collis P. Huntington and Charles Crocker, founders of the railroad.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE SILVER METEOR got its first set of rebuilt Heritage cars on Feb 17, when train 87 departed that city with the following consist (no engine numbers available): cars 1350, 1455, 2915, 2440, 4646, 4640, 4639, 4010, 20234, 8510, (cars to St. Petersburg:) 4638, 4637, 4641, 4642, 4008, 3111, 2431 and 2437.....

THE MONTREALER NOW has full-service electrified dining cars. The first run of a MONTREALER with such a car was northbound from Washington on Feb 20. Consist of that train was: engine 971; cars 1451, 2893, 2084, 8503 diner, 20017, 21257, 21882, 21811, 21815, 21826 (plus four other cars that were cut off at New York). Note that besides Amcoaches and an Amcafe the train carried a sleeper, slumbercoach and diner, all rebuilt Heritage cars (electrified conventional equipment).....

AMTRAK'S EMERGING CORRIDORS report is expected to be delivered to Congress by Mar 6 or 9, according to the latest word from Amtrak.....

CHICAGO UNION STATION was the scene of ceremonies on Feb 10 to mark completion of the $2.5 million rehabilitation of the main waiting room and passenger concourse following last summer's fire. Mayor Jane Byrne of Chicago officiated at the ribbon cutting ceremonies and also stated that she is considering using the waiting room as a possible reception site to honor Mrs. Anwar Sadat, wife of Egypt's President, on a visit to Chicago on Mar 21.....

★ ★ ★

THE EMPIRE BUILDER, running eastbound, derailed at Blacktail, Montana, 19 miles west of Glacier National Park the morning of Feb 27. Less than 10 people were injured, of 225 aboard, the one serious injury being a possible concussion. Helicopters and at least one ambulance moved to the derailment scene. The second locomotive and all 7 Superliner cars derailed but remained upright--baggage, three coaches, coach serving as lounge, diner and sleeper. Eleven miles west, at Essex, a private car and freight locomotive were located, and they were used as a shuttle to bring passengers from the stricken train. No reason was given for the cause.....

LATEST UNCONFIRMED REPORT we have on steam excursion plans for the California State RR Museum opening in May is that the 8444 and Challenger locos will not use the WP into California, but will travel instead on the SP.....

THE SUNSET LIMITED ran a second section between El Paso and Los Angeles departing Feb 28. The train consisted of five Finlay Fun Time Tours cars and one SDP40F locomotive. The cars were returning from a Mexico tour, and since Amtrak had converted the SUNSET to Superliners in the meantime, it ran the cars separately.....

NEW YORK STATE Dept. of Transportation announced Feb 25 that it has revoked its agreement with the Adirondack Railway Corporation to operate service between Lake Placid and Remsen NY (near Utica). The state is still trying to get federal funds to cover rehabilitation of the line, and when the rehabilitation problem is resolved the state will solicit proposals from potential operators to provide service on the route, the state DOT said. In revoking the ARC agreement, the DOT charged the operators with failing to maintain a project budget and keep adequate records of work done on rebuilding the track.....

LONG DISTANCE SUPERLINER trains are being advertised in a series of Amtrak newspaper ads like the one pictured at left. Under a painting of a Superliner train complete with Sightseer car in mountainous country, the caption "Oh beautiful for spacious trains" appears. Two issues ago we mentioned the huge color ad for the COAST STARLIGHT in National Geographic magazine (Feb.). Apparently this is one of a series: we find a similar 2-page ad in Sunset magazine (Mar.) for the CRESCENT. The color photo is of Perryman MD at 5:25pm...

WASHINGTON UNION STATION--the original structure, not the adjoining smaller Amtrak station--was closed Feb 23 after heavy rains poured thru the roof. The roof has been leaking since 1972, and the more than $100 million put into the building to transform it into a National Visitors Center for the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976 has failed to end the structure's problems. Senator Moynihan (D-NY) introduced a $40 million bill in late Feb to convert it back into a train station. The roof alone needs $10 million in repairs. The National Park Service has jurisdiction over the building.....

AMTRAK BUDGET HEARINGS, and hearings on Conrail and the DOT budget begin in Washington Mar 5 and run thru at least the 19th. Congressman Florio's Surface Transportation Subcommittee gets things rolling Mar 5 as DOT Secretary Drew Lewis testifies. NARP said it will be testifying Mar 13 before a Senate transportation group.....

★ ★ ★

THE BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA transit system shut down completely at the end of Feb, as it is running out of money and expected an $800,000 deficit by next September. 30,000 riders had to find alternate means of getting around. The 8-year old system, which uses buses, has had financial problems since its inception.....

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY LEWIS attended the Amtrak Board meeting of Feb 25. It was the first time a DOT Secretary attended such a meeting since the incumbency of John Volpe when Amtrak was very young. Amtrak said that the meeting was routine, with nothing very exciting happening.....

AMTRAK'S FAMILY FARE plan will have restrictions lifted Mar 1, Amtrak said just before the end of Feb. Previously family fare trips could not begin on Friday or Sunday; now they can begin any day. They are also permitted now on Easter and other major holidays, Amtrak said. They do not apply on Metroliners or in combination with excursion discount fares. Under the family plan the head of house pays full fare, spouse and kids 12-21 pay half-fare, kids 2-11 pay one-quarter-fare, and kids under two go free of charge.....

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR EXCURSION fares will be good every day during the period Mar 1 thru Apr 25, Amtrak announced. Previously they were not honored after 11am on Fridays, Sundays and holidays. They apply to all Corridor trains except Metroliners. Amtrak hopes to stimulate ridership even more with this ruling and with the family plan changes mentioned above. In addition, the INTER-AMERICAN has a special fare promotion Mar 1-Apr 26, as reported last issue (a return fare for $5 for trips to or from Texas points).....

PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS STATION will be moved to a downtown location and will begin operation there Apr 26. Conrail on Feb 24 gave final approval to the move. The present station will be dismantled and reassembled at the new site, where two 100-foot blacktop platforms will be laid. Instead of Lexan in the shelter, General Electric has given Amtrak free of charge some of its new Margard scratch-resistant glazing material. NARP Director Kevin J. Gregoire will be master of ceremonies for a station inaugural to be held when the LAKE SHORE stops there on Apr 26.....

THE FAMILY LINES Safety Express ran two fantrips from Tampa to Dunnellon FL in its first weekend of Florida excursions. C&O engine 614 ran Feb 21, and diesels pulled the train on Feb 22. It was reported that the 614 suffered a repeat of valve and cylinder troubles that it had last fall. The scheduled one-way ferry trip from Tampa to Miami for Feb 23 was delayed until Feb 27 for repairs. On the 21st, the train separated between the two tenders, putting it into an emergency stop, dumping much of the water supply in the tenders, and necessitating an extra water stop at Dade City. Otherwise, the runs went smoothly.....

TUCSON TO LOS ANGELES daily train service via Phoenix and Mesa was the subject of a meeting at the Phoenix office of the Arizona DOT Feb 11 between officials of the two states involved. All concerned seem enthusiastic about such a service, and it was reported that Amtrak is very interested also. The passenger service would run as a 403-B operation and would serve Palm Springs in addition to Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and the Arizona cities.....

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THE PRIARIE MARKSMAN is the subject of current newspaper advertising. Good-sized ads picture an Amfleet train drawn by engine 312, with the headline "Get Into Training, Peoria..." We're not sure who placed the ads--perhaps a state or local agency, since they don't have the look of an Amtrak ad.....

OHIO RAIL TRANSPORTATION Authority said this month that it will seek public support to ameliorate the threatened rail fund cutback. ORTA will hold meetings in 12 Ohio cities--Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Cleveland, Springfield, Lima, Marion, Ashland, Kent, Warren, Carrollton and Zanesville--concerning the threat of losing 500 or miles of Conrail lines in Ohio. After the hearings, ORTA will present the state's case to the USRA and Congress. Meeting locations and dates will be announced later. Said ORTA executive director Robert J. Casey, "We are concerned about the effect of the Conrail cutbacks on the state's economy, which is already in bad shape as a result of the recession." In other news, Dr. Novice G. Fawcett, former president of Ohio State University, was elected in Feb as board chairman of ORTA.....

ALL 25 SUPERLINER Sightseer lounges are expected to be delivered to Amtrak by the end of April, with all Superliner cars received by the end of July.....

BURLINGTON NORTHERN INC. wants to move its corporate headquarters to Seattle this summer and set up a holding company. The railroad operations would remain centered in St. Paul MN. Company officials said they want to cut clerical and track maintenance employees to improve their profit picture.....

OHIO GOVERNOR RHODES has tried to eliminate the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority by cutting its funding from the fiscal 1982 and 1983 budget. ORTA supporters seem confident that the state legislature will restore ORTA's funding. The agency is trying to develop a high-speed rail passenger system for the Midwest.....

OHIO ARP MEMBERS will travel to California on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, leaving

Chicago May 3, to visit the state Rail-Fair. They have dubbed their excursion the "Sacramento Special".....

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY is the subject of a fare promotion from Feb thru Apr 25, which offers a roundtrip on the train for the one-way price plus $1 when a coupon printed in Oregon newspapers is presented. Tickets must be purchased by Apr 25 and used within 21 days. Each individual must have a coupon to qualify.....

THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE was delayed two hours in its departure from Jackson MI on Feb 16 because Conrail was treating the day as a holiday, but Amtrak was not and sold tickets for use that day. Finally Conrail rounded up a crew and the train ran..

THE SUNSET LIMITED got its electric-powered Superliner cars in Feb, phasing out steam-heated conventional cars and leaving only the Florida service still using the older equipment. The last steam-heated SUNSET left L.A. on Feb 24 and reached New Orleans on Feb 26. Amtrak in a press release noted that it has accomplished this conversion in only 10 years. "It took Great Britain over 20 years following consolidation by the government of the four systems to accomplish what Amtrak has done in half the time".....

ADVERTISERS HAVE SOMETIMES been accused of planting hidden symbols and words in their ads as subliminal selling devices. Imagine Amtrak's dismay when it discovered it had published such an ad inadvertently. The corporation puts out a series of color tour folders titled South, East, Escorted, West and Group. In its South tour folder printed in Jan, page 38 has a color photo of a young woman in a dining car, with the caption "Dinner in the diner, nothing could be finer" (words taken from the old popular song, "Chattanooga Choo-Choo"). The expensive 40-page folder was already distributed before someone noticed that the woman in the photo is wearing a ring that is inscribed with a four-letter taboo word. The photo must be viewed upside down to read the word. Amtrak lost no time in ordering all copies of the folder in circulation recalled, thus assuring it will be a scarce collector's item.....

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400 TRAVEL AGENTS and tour operators from the Pacific Area--Australia, New Zealand, the Orient, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands--rode the COAST STARLIGHT from Los Angeles to Oaklandon Feb 21 as part of their participation in a Pacific Area Travel Association conference in the two cities.....

SOUTHBOUND SILVER METEOR derailed just eight blocks short of the train station in Orlando FL on Feb 15. The track ahead of the train, for reasons unknown, made a twist to a 90° angle (the left rail). The train stopped smoothly and no one was injured. Amtrak called rental cars to take passengers to their destinations. The derailment was in a double track area and it did not tie up the rail line. Engine 629 and three passenger cars had to be rerailed.....

THE INTER-AMERICAN northbound was held at San Antonio on Feb 18 when the line was blocked by a freight train with 5 diesel engines that collided with a gravel truck somewhere north of San Antonio. The train ran to Laredo at train 21 that same evening. Consist was: engine 301, cars 1242, 2884, 20233, and 4002. Car 4002 is an electrified former SP coach with handicapped facilities.....

CITY OF SLIDELL, Louisiana is asking for state aid to upgrade railroad crossings after some recent accidents. And the city council in late Jan introduced a bill that would lower the speed limit of trains within the city from 25 to 5mph. This would apply to Amtrak's CRESCENT as well as to freight trains.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT should have 60 minutes cut from its running time, Amtrak believes, but the Southern Pacific is arguing for a cut of 30 minutes.....

HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED BUS accident happened Feb 19 when a commuter bus ran off an nterstate 95 bridge in Quantico VA and landed front-first in a creek, killing ten oeople and injuring about 30 others. The bus was owned by D&J Transportation of redericksburg VA.....

AMTRAK'S HOOSIER STATE running towards Chicago on Feb 18 was hit by two automobiles at a crossing in Calumet City. The first car hit the engine, killing the car driver. The second car hit the last car of the 4-car train, carrying 200 passengers, but the driver was not injured. No passengers were hurt, and the train continued on to Chicago. The first car apparently tried to beat the train to the crossing.....

CONRAIL'S QUARTERLY DEFICIT for the last quarter of 1980 was the smallest in its history--$12 million.....

AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION recently borrowed $400,000 from private Washington investors and is seeking a federal loan guarantee of $5.75 million.....

THE ALASKA RAILROAD will run an express service May 17 thru Sep 20 between Anchorage and Fairbanks, with one stop, at McKinley Park. The run will be 90 minutes shorter than previous schedules. Anchorage departure will be 8am, with a 2pm McKinley Park arrival, and 5:45pm at Fairbanks. Fairbanks departure will be 10:30am with also a 2pm McKinley Park arrival. Express service will run daily, with dome cars and full dining service, while a tri-weekly train on the previous schedule will also operate.....

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RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR eastbound and the eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR will once again connect, starting Apr 26. The SFZ will reach Ogden at 6:20am. Amtrak's timetable will state that "(Rio Grande) Bus will wait up to 15 minutes for passengers connecting from Amtrak train #6..."....

ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF'S holding company IC Industries Inc. has been talking with one or more possible merger partners. No names have been divulged, but industry speculation has it that Canadian Pacific Rail could be involved.....

FOR INTRA-FLORIDA TRAVEL, Amtrak is now offering 30% roundtrip coach discounts. Amtrak said this month that the discounts are in effect "until further notice".....

A NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS: We have not yet caught up on updating our address labels. If you have renewed recently and are still receiving renewal reminders, please ignore them as part of our effort to keep RTN published on schedule. Don't write us unless you receive an issue stamped "this is your last issue" and you have renewed.

CARS & CONSISTS

*NIGHT OWL, train 67, Providence RI Feb 14: engine 202 (F40); cars 1157, 21826, 21093, 20119, 21006, 21115, 20215, 21213, 21110, 2085, 2455, 1218.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, Los Angeles Feb 24 (last run of steam-heated equipment): engines 638, 642, 537 (SDPs); cars 1114, 2150 "Silver Flower", 4532, 4480, 4540, 4543, 4502, dome 9362 "Mountain View", 8096, 2672 "Silver Hollow", 2671 "Silver Plateau", 2831 "Lebanon Valley", 2675 "Silver Vale", deadheads 2262 "Placid Haven", 2264 "Placid Meadow", 3321 "Molly Pitcher", 3322 "Anthony Wayne", 2677 "Silver Basin". Same, San Antonio Feb 10: engines SP 8536 (SD40-2), Atk 642, 535; cars 1086, 2150 "Silver Flower", 4525, 4483, 4522, 4893, 3360, 8043, 2663 "Silver Slope", 2655 "Silver Valley", deadheads: 8062, 5651, 5668, 5670, 5652, 5678, 5649, 7200.

*SILVER STAR, train 81, Philadelphia Feb 20: engine 952 (E-60); cars 1424, 1428, 4417, 2866 "St. Johns River", 2537 "Wren", 5425, 4466, 4583, 4467, 8023, 3331, 4469, 4553, 5628, 5626, 2788 "Berkeley County".

*SILVER METEOR, train 88, Sanford FL Feb 25: engine 336 (F40); cars (all HEP): 1550, 3118, 4638, 4637, 4641, 4670, 4008, 2436, 2437.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Kansas City Feb 6: engines 288 (F40), 510 (SDP), 247 (F40); cars 1262, 1161, Hi-level 39910, Superliner 31042, Hi-level 39942, Superliners 34067, 34026, 33010 (first lounge on train 3), 38031, 32011, 32007, deadheads 38010, 39956 Hi-level. Train 4, Kansas City Feb 20: engines 291, 247 (F40s); cars 1229, 1161, Hi-level 39920, Superliner 31008, Hi-level 39944, Superliners 34056, 38009, Atk business car 10000, Superliner slpr 32028 set out at Dillwyn KS due to hotbox; replaced on train 4 Feb 21 at Newton KS.

*CRESCENT, train 20, Slidell LA Feb 16: engines 258, 248 (F40s); cars 1250, 1624, 4732, 4720, 4736, 4629, 4734, 4735, 3108, 2997 "Pine Ridge", 2443 "Walnut Ridge", deadheads 5666, 5681, 8320, 8097, 8333.

*ANN RUTLEDGE, train 301, Kansas City Feb 2: engine 305; cars 21201, 20223, 21241, MoPac office car 8.

"SWITCHING.
A card game like that railroad switching at its best. Send $3.00 to Kangaro, P.O. Box 3384, Kansas City, Kansas 66103."

RAIL FANTRIPS

Mar 16-21: Pacific Northwest Senior Citizens' Tour. Vancouver B.C.-Seattle, bus thru Olympic Peninsula, Olympic Ntl Park, Lincoln City OR, Oregon Coast, rail Portland-Vancouver. Skyline Travel, 563 Granville, Vancouver B.C. 604-685-6102.

Mar 29: 1981 Maple Sugar Excursion, Pittsburgh PA-Versailles-West Newton-Connellsville-Meyersdale RT, diesel via B&O to Maple Sugar Festival at Meyersdale. $38. SSAE to: Pittsburgh Chapter, NRHS, PO Box 822, Pittsburgh PA 15230. 471-1155.

Apr 11-May 2: South African Steam Safari. Incl 10-day excursion with Rwy Society of South Africa--2000 miles behind steam of 13 classes; run-bys; optional extra Blue Train ride. $2925. Philadelphia NRHS c/o Glen Roc, 194 Scotch Rd, Trenton NJ.

May 30-31: Potatoland Special on B&A. Northern Maine Jct-Oakfield-Ft. Kent-Madawaska incl entire branch Ft. Kent-St. Francis; overnite Edmonston N.B. $110. Limited. Eric Robison, 470 RR Club, 391 Cottage Rd, South Portland ME 04106. SSAE.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. To be sure of entry in time, send full info at least 4 weeks before event. Be sure to address letter as follows:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"NEW YORK: From the air, the slice of America between here and Washington looks like a miniature model of the economy, seemingly a smoothly functioning series of cities, suburbs and farms. At either end, a profusion of new offices overflow with people, paper and humming electronics. But a rail passenger sees something strikingly out-of-kilter in between--the countless blackened or broken-out windows of failed or faltering factories."

--Richard F. Janssen in Wall Street Journal, Feb 23.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"One of the new Muni Metro cars broke down yesterday and 100 passengers were led to safety at the Church Street and Van Ness Avenue stations... Electric power had to be turned off for about an hour to allow Municipal Railway crewmen to correct the problem--a car that lost contact with overhead wires. This was caused by a defective overhead power collection unit, known as a 'pentagraph.'"

--San Francisco Chronicle, Feb 18.

(All five of its fingers slipped off the wire.)

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DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

VIA RAIL system folder timetable, colour, 55 pages, plus local folders. Send $1 for postage and handling to: H. Gow, Box 300, Chelsea, Que. JOX 1NO, Canada.

RAILROAD CLOTH EMBLEMS. Over 300 different types. Send $1.00 for two samples and list. Joseph Lajoie, P.O. Box 3, 22 Stevens St., Methuen, Mass. 01844.

TIMETABLE BUY-SELL-SWAP MEET every 3rd Saturday of each month, St Johns Church 31st St & 7th Ave, New York, across the street from Penn Station, all welcome 10am-noon. Join the National Association of Timetable Collectors. $14 dues bring two regularly produced professional publications. Tom Coval, 21 E Robin Rd, Holland PA 18966.

TROLLEY TRAILS THROUGH THE WEST, Volumes 1-Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane, 5-Montana/Utah, 6-Western Canada, 7-Northern California, 8-Southern California $4.00 each. Moneyback guarantee.
Wilson Bros. Publications, Box 712rtn, Yakima, WA 98907.

Duplicate Kodachrome slides of Midwestern railroads in the 1960's.
GM&O, CB&Q, IC, Santa Fe, Rock Island, Milwaukee Road, Soo, Wabash, Monon, C&EI, C&NW. List and sample, $1. LSSAE to: John T. Winchester, 1742 Warwick Court, Wheaton, Illinois, 60187.

RAILROAD PICTURE POSTCARDS, 570 different views of 178 railroads in 16 countries on 5 continents. S.S.A.E. for complete listing and sample card to: Mary Jayne's Railroad Specialties, Inc., Route 5, Box 132-A Covington, Virginia 24426.

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AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

DECEMBER 1980 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE OVER 1979

Metroliners	127,506	-5.0
NE Corr Conventional	383,469	-6.6
Phila-NH-Springfld	24,875	-4.8
NY-Philadelphia	170,242	-8.6
Phila-Harrisburg	79,542	-6.2
NY-Harrisburg	26,305	52.1
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR:	811,939	-5.5
NY-Niagara Falls	62,030	5.8
Chicago-St. Louis	8,845	-13.8
Chicago-Milwaukee	25,722	3.0
Chic.-Detroit/Toledo	39,899	13.0
Chicago-Carbondale	14,804	8.2
Chicago-Quincy	8,231	-2.5
L.A.-San Diego	85,955	3.7
Vancouver-Eugene	16,880	30.9
Washington-Cincinnati	11,652	22.1
Wash.-Martinsburg	21,299	10.5
Oakland-Bakersfield	12,222	115.5
New York-Montreal	9,128	-16.8
Chicago-Port Huron	10,589	15.7
Chicago-Dubuque	4,379	-18.5
Chicago-Duluth	9,350	1.9
Chicago-Valparaiso	17,985	21.9
Chicago-Indianapolis	8,076	--
Chicago-Peoria	2,499	--
Chicago-Kansas City	15,902	59.6
Phila.-Pittsburgh	6,690	--
Portland-Eugene	3,043	--
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	395,180	15.9
Washington-Montreal	33,096	2.9
New York-Florida	64,743	5.6
Chicago-NY/Washington	25,430	12.3
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	13,504	8.5
Chicago-Seattle	32,872	6.6
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	49,298	8.4
Chicago-Los Angeles	29,619	-1.8
Chicago-New Orleans	18,191	-8.6
Chicago-Texas	22,049	9.3
L.A.-New Orleans	9,595	18.4
L.A.-Seattle	51,432	9.1
Chicago-NY/Boston	32,047	20.0
Boston-Newport News	40,802	-27.9
New York-Savannah	36,870	.9
Seattle-Salt Lake	16,990	4.9
New York-New Orleans	43,823	111.5
TOTAL LONG DIST.:	520,361	6.8
Special trains	1,797	-64.5
SYSTEM TOTAL:	1,729,277	2.2

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

The above Amtrak ridership figures, for December, arrived just after our last issue went to press. Ridership over the Amtrak system was generally up in December, with short distance trains up 15.9%, long distance up 6.8%, and systemwide patronage up 2.2% over Dec 1979. Northeast Corridor ridership continued to show decreases due to disruption of schedules because of reconstruction work. The Corridor was down 5.5%.

For the fiscal year so far, Oct 1-Dec 31, 1980, short distance was up 16.5% and long distance increased 10.9%. Northeast Corridor was down 7.6%, but for the system as a whole, ridership was up 1.7% compared to the same quarter of 1979. During the fourth quarter of 1980, Amtrak trains carried 5,087,086 passengers, compared with 5,003,658 in the last quarter of 1979.

Amtrak continues to combine ridership figures for the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and the DESERT WIND in one figure. Breaking them down, the SFZ had 37,269 passengers while the DESERT WIND had 12,029. Trains with blanks in the % increase column are those in operation less than one year.

BACK ISSUES

RTN is now offering our Tenth Anniversary Year volume, all the issues of 1980--18 issues sent all in one parcel at the price of $8 postpaid. Other back issues are also available and will be listed in upcoming issues, or write for information. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

pg. 23

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Oakland-Bakersfield	12,222	115.5
New York-Montreal	9,128	-16.8
Chicago-Port Huron	10,589	15.7
Chicago-Dubuque	4,379	-18.5
Chicago-Duluth	9,350	1.9
Chicago-Valparaiso	17,985	21.9
Chicago-Indianapolis	8,076	--
Chicago-Peoria	2,499	--
Chicago-Kansas City	15,902	59.6
Phila.-Pittsburgh	6,690	--
Portland-Eugene	3,043	--
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	395,180	15.9
Washington-Montreal	33,096	2.9
New York-Florida	64,743	5.6
Chicago-NY/Washington	25,430	12.3
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	13,504	8.5
Chicago-Seattle	32,872	6.6
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	49,298	8.4
Chicago-Los Angeles	29,619	-1.8
Chicago-New Orleans	18,191	-8.6
Chicago-Texas	22,049	9.3
L.A.-New Orleans	9,595	18.4
L.A.-Seattle	51,432	9.1
Chicago-NY/Boston	32,047	20.0
Boston-Newport News	40,802	-27.9
New York-Savannah	36,870	.9
Seattle-Salt Lake	16,990	4.9
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*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

The above Amtrak ridership figures, for December, arrived just after our last issue went to press. Ridership over the Amtrak system was generally up in December, with short distance trains up 15.9%, long distance up 6.8%, and systemwide patronage up 2.2% over Dec 1979. Northeast Corridor ridership continued to show decreases due to disruption of schedules because of reconstruction work. The Corridor was down 5.5%.

For the fiscal year so far, Oct 1-Dec 31, 1980, short distance was up 16.5% and long distance increased 10.9%. Northeast Corridor was down 7.6%, but for the system as a whole, ridership was up 1.7% compared to the same quarter of 1979. During the fourth quarter of 1980, Amtrak trains carried 5,087,086 passengers, compared with 5,003,658 in the last quarter of 1979.

Amtrak continues to combine ridership figures for the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and the DESERT WIND in one figure. Breaking them down, the SFZ had 37,269 passengers while the DESERT WIND had 12,029. Trains with blanks in the % increase column are those in operation less than one year.

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